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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

30 July 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE BOARD

SUBJECT: Changes in National Intelligence Estimates on Soviet Long Range Striking Forces (Draft for Board Consideration)

Written in response to a verbal request by the White House to Mr. McCone.

H. STOERTZ, JR.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

30 July 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Changes in National Intelligence Estimates on Soviet Long Range Striking Forces (Draft for Board Consideration)

- 1. Since December 1960, the USIB has submitted six National Intelligence Estimates and a set of Intelligence Assumptions for Planning on current and future Soviet strengths in weapon systems suitable for long range nuclear attack. Most of these USIB documents have contained discussion and numerical estimates on each of the major components of Soviet long range striking forces: ICBMs, MRBMs, and IRBMs, missile-launching submarines, and heavy and medium bombers.
- 2. In general, all of the estimates since December 1960 have projected vigorous and continuing Soviet programs to enhance the capabilities of the long range striking forces. Throughout the period since December 1960, the USIB estimates have reflected the judgments that these programs are long-term in nature, that they have high but not exclusive priority, and that they are geared to



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keep pace with technological change. There has been no evidence that these programs are concentrated toward peaking Soviet capabilities at some particular level at any particular time. Neither have we reached the conclusion in any of these estimates that Soviet long range striking and other forces would become so powerful as to permit the USSR deliberately to initiate general nuclear war with the West.

- 3. The same broad trends in force levels have been forecast in all these estimates. We have anticipated a substantial growth in Soviet ICEM capabilities into the mid-1960's, and a steady growth in missile submarine forces in the same period. We have estimated that the USSR would acquire a formidable force of MRBMs and IRBMs before the mid-1960's, and that the force level in these systems would then tend to stabilize. We have projected a gradual decline in the numbers of medium and heavy bombers in Long Range Aviation.
- 4. Within these general trends, however, we have had to adjust our estimates on Soviet programs for all these weapon systems as new evidence has been acquired. In some cases, the adjustments in our numerical estimates have been very large. Considering the entire period since December 1960, we have sharply reduced our estimates of operational Soviet ICBM launchers, whereas we have

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raised our estimates of Soviet strength in all other weapon systems for long range attack, most notably in MRBM and IRBM launchers and in missile submarines.

- 5. In Tables 1 through 6, we have summarized for comparative purposes the quantitative estimates of the USIB on each of the pertinent weapon systems since December 1960.
- 6. In the case of the ICEM program, the earlier estimates were made on the basis of extremely fragmentary evidence. They projected a steady buildup in Soviet strength in first-generation ICEMs, the only Soviet systems in this category then known to exist. Subsequent evidence on deployment activities and on R&D in second-generation ICEM systems has led us to the conclusion that the Soviets cut back their first-generation program in favor of a later buildup with better systems. Our sharply reduced estimate of September 1961 has since been adjusted upward somewhat because the USSR has had exceptional success in overcoming R&D problems with its second-generation ICEMs, and because comprehensive evidence on deployment activities has revealed an increase in the tempo of the program.
- 7. The tables, of course, do not reflect our much improved knowledge of Soviet operational methods, reaction times, refire

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capabilities, and other factors important to a full appreciation of Soviet ICBM capabilities. The probable advent of hardened sites is perhaps the most important new element in our estimates on this Soviet program.

- 8. Similar changes in Soviet programming or in the quantity and quality of evidence available have influenced our estimates on the other components of the Soviet long range striking forces.
 - a. In the case of MRBMs and IRBMs, the deployment program did not level off as soon as we had predicted, and the number of operational launchers is much larger than we had expected. On the other hand, we have learned that these systems are deployed at fixed, soft sites rather than in fully mobile units, and hence they are now known to be more readily targetable than we had believed.
 - b. In the case of missile submarines, we correctly estimated that the USSR would acquire nuclear-powered systems, but the Soviets apparently satisfied themselves for a time with larger numbers of submarines having less sophisticated missile capabilities than we anticipated. We predicted the development of submerged-launch, longer range ballistic

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missiles, but did not expect the appearance of nuclear subs equipped with cruise-type missiles.

- c. We have raised our estimates of long range bomber strength on the basis of order-of-battle evidence which has negated our estimate that the reductions in conventional capabilities announced by Khrushchev in 1960 would be carried out and would affect Long Range Aviation.
- 9. With the acquisition of a substantial body of good evidence since December 1960, we now have more confidence in our estimates of Soviet strength in long range striking forces for the next year or so. As illustrated by Table 2, there is also a greater measure of agreement among the members of the USTB in estimating Soviet force levels in such critical weapon systems as ICEMs. We continue to expect, however, that there will be differences of interpretation of the evidence among the USIB members, and that new evidence will require further adjustments in our estimates, even for the short-term future. Projections into the period beyond the next year or so will continue to be based more on general considerations than on direct evidence, and therefore will be subject to wider differences of interpretation and greater margins of uncertainty. FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

SHERMAN KENT

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TABLE I

Operational Soviet ICBM Launchers

CIA or USIB Majority Estimates

Projection for:

Date of				
<u>Estimate</u>	<u>mid-62</u>	mid-63	mid-64	mid-67
December 1960	270	400	-	•••
June 1961	100-200	150-300	200-400	
September 1961	About 25 2/	75-125	-	-
November 19611/	25-50	75-125	150-275	350-650
January 1962	35-50	100-125 3/	-	***
July 1962	About 50	125-175	200-300	300-600

^{1/} Not an NIE. The November 1961 figures appear in USIB approved Intelligence Assumptions for Planning, submitted in response to a requirement of the JCS.

No specific figure given. The NIE concluded that the force level in September 1961 was in the range of 10-25 launchers, and that this force level would not increase markedly in the months immediately ahead.

^{3/} No specific figure given. The NIE concluded that the force level in mid-1963 was likely to fall toward the high side of the 75-125 range given in the September 1961 estimate.

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TABLE 2

Operational Soviet ICBM Launchers

Full Range of Estimates by USIB Members 1/

Date of	Projection For:				
Estimate	M1d-1962	Mid-1963	Mld-1964	Mid-1967	
December 1960	125-450	200-700	<u> </u>		
June 1961	50-300	100-550	150-850	3/	
September 1961	25-100	75-250	ph 46	===	
November 1961 4/	25-250	75- 250	<u>5</u> /	<u> </u>	
January 1962	35-100	100-250			
July 1962	50-100	100-250	150-450	250-800	

As a general rule, in NIE's throughout this period, the lowest numbers in the range of estimates made by USIB members have been submitted by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, and the highest by the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF.

In this NIE one member of the USIB submitted an estimate for the years beyond 1963. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, estimated Soviet Operational ICBM launchers at 950 in 1964 and 1,200 in 1965.

In this NIE, one member of the USIB submitted an estimate for the years beyond 1964. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF estimated Soviet Operational ICBM launchers at 1,150 in 1965 and 1,450 in 1966.

Not an NIE. The November 1961 figures appear in USIB-approved Intelligence Assumptions for Planning, submitted in response to a requirement of the JCS.

For purposes of these Assumptions, no USIB member submitted an individual estimate for the years beyond 1963. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, recorded his belief that the most probable Soviet program for the period to 1967 would approximate the high side of the range assumed by the majority of USIB members.

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TABLE 3

Operational Soviet MRBM and IRBM Launchers

Date of	Projection For:				
Estimate	Mid-1962	M1d-1963	Mid-1964	M1d-1967	
December 1960	250	250	250	w ee	
June 1961 $\frac{1}{2}$	275	300	300		
September 1961	350-450 <u>2</u> /		350-450	350-450	
July 1962	₅₀₀ <u>3</u> /	550-650 ⁴ /	550650	550-650	

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, submitted a dissenting estimate as follows:

Mid-1962	M1d-1963	<u> 1964</u>		
100-200	200-250	200-275		

This force level estimated for some time in 1962-1963, with levelling off in program thereafter.

The NIE states that we do not have evidence that all these launch pads are manned, and it is possible that some of them represent alternate firing positions.

This force level estimated for some time in 1963-1964, with levelling off in program thereafter.

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TABLE 4

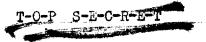
SOVIET BALLISTIC MISSILE SUBMARINES

Date of	Projection for:				
Estimate	Mid-62	Mid-63	Mid-64	Mid-66	Mid-67
Diesel-powered					
December 1960	5/1	214	24		
June 1961	24	24	2]4	24	-
August 1961	24	24	2]1	24	Birt 400+
January 1962	25	25	25	25	enter e
July 1962	32	32 - 35	32 - 35	32-35	32 - 35
Nuclear-powered					
December 1960	2	6	10	Britis -	Same of Highs
June 1961	1/	4	8	16	emb-alva-
August 1961	10	13	16	24	SEP-COL
January 1962	10	15-16	2022	30-32	Mills Para
July 1962 2/	10	12-15	15-20	<u> </u>	25-30

No specific figure given. The NIE stated that it was possible that a few nuclear-powered missile subs would be operational in mid-1962.

2/ and 3/ on following page.

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CONTINUATION OF FOOTNOTES TO TABLE 4:

- This NIE for the first time included an estimate of nuclear-powered submarines equipped with cruise-type missiles, probably designed primarily for use against ships but also suitable for attacking land targets. In addition to the nuclear-powered ballistic missile subs shown in the table, the NIE stated that at least 4 nuclear-powered cruise missile subs were operational in mid-1962, and estimated that about two dozen would be operational in mid-1967.
- 3/ No specific figure given.

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TABLE 5

Heavy Bombers and Tankers in Long Range Aviation

USIB Majority Estimates
(Air Force Estimates, Where differing, in parentheses)

Date of Projection for:						
Estimate	Mid-62	Mid-63	Mid-64	Mid-66	Mid-67	
December 1960	1710 (500)	130 (200)	120 (200)			
June 1961	140 (200)	130 (200)	120 (200)	100 (200)	CENTRO	
August 1961	150	145	140	120	10.00	
January 1962	160 (200)	150 (200)	145 (200)	125 (200)	200 (00-	
July 1962	165 (200)	165 (200)	150 (200)	120 (200)	105 (200)	
Revision in process as of 31 July 1962	170 - 200	170- 200	16 0-(170 190 200)	130-(170- 160 200	110-(170- 0) 140 200	

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TABLE 6

Medium Bombers and Tankers in Long Range Aviation

USIB Majority Estimates
(Air Force Estimates, where differing, in parentheses)

Projection For:

Date of Estimate	M i d-62	Mid-63	Mid-64	Mid-66	Mid-67
December 1960	800 (950)	800 (900)	800	T a t a	Aplici visus
June 1961	850 (950)	800 (900)	800	700 (750)	स्था संस्थ
August 1961	925	850	825	7 50	
January 1962	9 00	800	7 50	650	10-10
July 1962	95 0	950	900	800	750